

## Message Text

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50

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 ARAE-00 DHA-02 IO-10 L-03 ORM-01

PRS-01 SCA-01 VO-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 INSE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 H-02 /054 W

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P R 221506Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4587

INFO GOV CZG

SOUTHCOM

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, PQ, PN, HA

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF HAITIAN NATIONALS

REF: (A) PANAMA 4305; (B) PORT AU PRINCE 1794

1. DEAN WEBSTER AND RABBI REISS, ACCOMPANIED BY FATHER JOHN KENNEDY, SUPERIOR AND PASTOR OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH (ROMAN CATHOLIC), AND REV. JOHN WHEATLEY, PASTOR OF BALBOA UNION CHURCH (PROTESTANT) CALLED ON DCM JULY 21 TO DISCUSS MATTER OF HAITIAN NATIONALS IN CANAL ZONE AWAITING REPATRIATION. THEY REITERATED THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED EARLIER TO PCC/CZG OFFICIALS BY DEAN WEBSTER AND RABBI REISS (REF A) THAT HAITIANS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO REPRISALS FROM GOH IN EVENT OF THEIR FORCIBLE RETURN TO HAITI. THEY CONFIRMED REPORT THAT SOME OF THE HAITIANS HAVE THREATENED TO COMMIT SUICIDE RATHER THAN FACE RETURN. FR. KENNEDY STATED HE HAS SPOKEN WITH PAPAL NUNCIO WHO ONCE SERVED IN HAITI AND WHO REPORTED IT WAS QUITE POSSIBLE RETURNING HAITIANS MIGHT SUFFER AT HANDS OF GOH AUTHORITIES. HOWEVER, THIS GENERAL STATEMENT IS THE ONLY NEW ELEMENT ON WHICH

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CLERGYMEN HAVE BASED THEIR APPROACH TO EMBASSY. THEY

STATE THAT HAITIANS ARE UNLETTERED AND HAVE NOT BEEN OFFERED OPPORTUNITY TO CLAIM POLITICAL ASYLUM. THEY ASKED WHAT WOULD BE EFFECT OF SUCH A CLAIM.

2. DCM TOLD CLERGYMEN THAT EMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE HAS REPORTED THAT THERE IS NO INSTANCE IN PAST FEW YEARS OF ANY GOH REPRISALS IN SIMILAR CASES (REF B) AND THIS INFORMATION IMPRESSED THEM BUT DID NOT TOTALLY ALLAY THEIR FEARS. DCM SAID REQUEST FOR "POLITICAL ASYLUM" WOULD ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION TO USG CONSIDERATION OF CASE BUT THAT MERE ALLEGATION OF SUCH STATUS WAS INSUFFICIENT AND THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE SUPPORTED.

3. DCM ASSURED CLERGYMEN THAT PCC/CZG OFFICIALS WERE CAREFULLY CONSIDERING MATTER AND THAT NO PRECIPITOUS ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN. HE SAID THAT CLERGYMEN'S CONCERNS WOULD BE CONVEYED TO DEPT.

JORDEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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